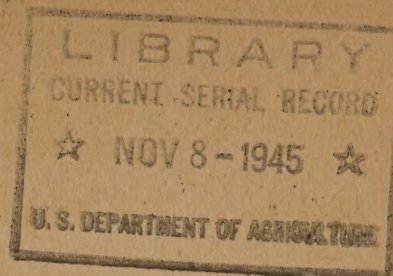


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Division of Extension Information
Extension Service
War Food Administration

Information Case Report No. 8



Radio

Subject: Minnesota Rural Forum of the Air.

Source: Minnesota Rural Youth Annual Report for 1942.

Objectives: To bring rural folks a broader picture of our world situation; to find out if the Extension Service in an organized way, through the radio, can reach large numbers of people with accurate, practical, and timely information; to provide rural youth with an opportunity to do a valuable service by making contacts with local community organizations and encouraging them to meet, listen, and hold discussions on the nights of these broadcasts.

How Organized: Three 30-minute panel discussions aimed at developing a broader understanding of the present world conflict were presented at 1-week intervals over Station WCCO by the Minnesota Agricultural Extension Service. The three topics discussed included "Underlying Causes of the Present World Conflict," "Our Part as Farm People in This Emergency," and "What Are We Fighting For?" Choice of panel members was based on (1) subject-matter knowledge and background; (2) proven radio abilities; and (3) name-appeal to the public and rural youth members. Four persons participated in each broadcast. Those selected were:

Clyde H. Bailey, Dean of the University Department of Agriculture.

Paul E. Miller, Director of the Minnesota Extension Service.

O. B. Jesness, Chief, Division of Agricultural Economics.

Dr. Wm. A. O'Brien, Director, Post Graduate Medical Training.

Herbert Heaton, Economics Historian.

Harold Deutsch, Historian.

Ruby Christenson, State Rural Youth Agent.

Gideon Seymour, Editorial Editor, Minneapolis Star-Journal.

Irene Neuschwander, Member, Redwood County Rural Youth Group.

E. W. Aiton, Assistant State 4-H Club Leader.

Build-up: Mimeographed information including suggested county organization procedure for stimulating groups to listen and discuss questions raised, leaders' discussion outlines, suggested news releases and appropriate mats, and forms for making summary reports of participation were sent to each county. News releases and radio announcements were also issued directly by the State office.

Follow-up: A well-planned survey of the people reached was made in each county and the county summary sent to the State office.

Results:

(1) Total number of group "listening meetings".....	881
(a) Attendance at meetings.....	8,837
(b) Minutes of discussion following such meetings.....	4,695
(2) Other individuals encouraged to listen.....	23,941
(3) Reactions of agents:	
(a) Want further broadcasts.....	26
(b) Do not want further broadcasts.....	0
(c) Undecided	13
(d) Did not answer.....	10

Recommendations: "With the cooperation of radio stations, agents, neighborhood leaders, and farm groups--teaching via radio could be very valuable. Timely information on the wartime program could be presented to farm homes very effectively. Majority of our farm homes have radios and with curtailed travel and less meetings in the picture, this type of a program would be most worth while for the Extension Service to initiate. Any State contemplating a forum of this type should designate some qualified individual to devote a major portion of his time to the project."

Comments: "WCCO, which is a 50,000-watt station, assigned class-A time to this particular project. The broadcast was aired between 8:30 and 9 p. m. Naturally it is very difficult to pry loose class-A time for an educational feature. Another problem which we ran into was coverage. It simply will not do to organize listeners in an area where reception is impossible or even difficult. We thought we had complete coverage in WCCO, but encountered some sour notes as a result of bad reception."

"Three tentative courses present themselves: (1) One station must be selected which has almost perfect reception in all parts of the State; (2) a network to reach all parts of the State must be enlisted; (3) the organization of listener groups must be regionalized."